

120 PRINCE BÜLOW AND HIS  
MEMOIRS

Lord Haldane once remarked, there was anarchy at the top. Though William II did not relish the control which the Chancellor endeavoured to maintain over his actions and speeches, there was no obvious competitor for the highest post. With the important exception of naval policy he had no deep-rooted confidence in his own judgment in the larger problems of diplomacy. His dependence on Bülow is strikingly illustrated in the, well-known correspondence, first published in *Die Grosse Politik* and reproduced in these pages, which followed the signature of the Pact of Björkö in 1905. The Chancellor advised his master to content himself with obtaining the Tsar's acceptance in principle of a defensive alliance, leaving the details to be subsequently worked out by Lamsdorff and himself. \*<sup>e</sup> A slight cloud passed over the intelligent and mobile countenance of His Majesty, which told me that it was his desire on this occasion, trusting to the magic of his personality, to manage the whole affair himself. When I asked if I was to accompany him, he replied in the most friendly way that my society was always a delight, but that this time he felt that he would achieve more if he confronted the Russian autocrat alone/' The signing of the Treaty was described in the most roseate Imperial telegram which Bülow ever received; but when the text arrived he discovered to his horror that it was confined to Europe, thereby depriving it of its chief value for Germany in the event of war with England. Still worse was the Kaiser's intention to draw Denmark into the alliance, in order that she might in case of need close the Baltic to an English fleet. Finally the Treaty was countersigned by Tschirschky, an official of the Foreign Office in attendance on the Kaiser, and by Admiral Birileff, who did not even read it.

The Chancellor dispatched a long and  
devastating criticism  
to his master, and added that he could not accept  
responsibility  
for what had occurred. The ruler replied in  
an emotional  
letter in which defence of his handiwork melts  
into passionate  
appeal. "I thought I had worked for you  
and achieved  
something out of the common, and then you  
send me a few  
cool lines and your resignation!! ! You will not  
expect me,  
dear Billow, to describe my feelings. To be  
treated thus by my  
best and most intimate friend, without any  
adequate reason,  
has given me such a terrible shock that I am  
absolutely broken  
and fear I am in for a nervous breakdown. . . .  
I have not  
deserved it. No, my friend, you remain in  
office and will  
continue to co-operate with me *ad majorem?*  
*Germaniae gloriam*"